

THE BLAST

LUDIA JESSEN

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Ricardo and Enrique Flores Magon

JUSTICE and not bullets, is what ought to be meted out to the revolutionists of Texas; and from now on we should demand that the persecution of innocent Mexicans should cease. And as to the revolutionists, we should also demand that they be not executed.

"The ones who should be shot are the 'rangers' and the band of bandits who accompany them in their depredations.

"Enough of reforms! What we hungry people want is entire liberty based on economic independence. Down with the so-called rights of private property; and, as long as this evil 'right' continues to exist, we shall remain under arms. Enough of mockery!"

These utterances constitute the counts against the Magons. And for this they face from two to five years in the penitentiary!

Think of the Magons

Edgcumb Pinchon

TWO GRAND old veterans of the workers' fight are dying—in jail. One of them already has been removed to the county hospital; the other is still fighting death in the tank. They are awaiting trial on a grave charge—they mistrust politicians and have said so in plain print. In the columns of their paper they have advised the Mexican peons to stand guard over the land they have won—rifle in hand!

For this they have been beaten and tossed into the steel trap; their little hand-printed paper has been suppressed, and they themselves have been held incommunicado under an enormous bail.

These men were the first to face the monstrous Diaz. Driven from Mexico, they fled to the United States—only to meet persecution bitter and unrelenting. Five of the ten years they have passed in this country have been dragged out behind the Liberty Bell bars. And now they face another long term.

The names of Ricardo and Enrique Magon need no introduction where freedom is loved. As editors and pub-

lishers of *El Regeneracion*, issued in Los Angeles in the interests of free land and free men in Mexico and throughout the world, they have stamped strong memories on the hearts of the workers everywhere. For twenty years they have sacrificed health, ambition and wealth—for they are "hidalgos" by birth—and have risked death a thousand times in the service of their ideal—and ours.

The Workers' International Defense League of Los Angeles, organized "in the service of all those captured by the Enemy," is defending our old friends. At the time of writing the treasury is empty—and the trial is set for May 31!

Comrades, these men belong to you and you to them. Stand by them to the limit of your power. And if you care nothing for the individual victim where we all are victims, remember that the life of our press is at the hazard in this bold and impudent attack upon Ricardo and Enrique. Only by the most determined and unceasing resistance can we keep a breathing space about us.

Send all contributions to P. D. Noel, 621 American Bank Building.

Preparedness

I BELIEVE in a "Preparedness" of construction not of destruction.

I do not believe the way to prepare for peace is to prepare for war—the conflagration in Europe gives the lie to this. You get what you prepare for. They prepared for war and got it. I do not believe we need fear Europe in her exhaustion if we did not in her strength.

Does any one believe, seriously believe, the United States—the blood kin to all of Europe—need fear Japan? Japan is busy enough with Asia.

But if there be a risk, I think it better to take the chance, rather than the certainty of creating a military caste—a military spirit, a military standard of glory and patriotism in this country.

I know that "Preparedness" adds hundreds of millions to the tax burden (and the toilers finally pay the tax), but I see beyond this.

I know the battleship builders and munition makers will reap great profits, but I look beyond this.

I know the investors in foreign securities and in Mexican lands, mines and railways will feel they have an army to fight for them, but I look beyond that.

I see the children taught military ideals, blind obedience and an unquestioning "Patriotism" in the schools.

I see this young isolated country picking up the pestilence of feudal militarism just as Europe is burning it out.

I know there is not a French toiler, a German, Russian or Englishman who is really interested in this war. They turned in twenty-four hours from good will and intermarriages to a hate which is causing even the legless and armless wrecks in the trenches to tear each other like maniacs.

Why? What was their quarrel? What will they gain out of the final settlement? Are they acting by reason, or by passion inflamed by their rulers?

I see it as a war of "Preparedness" brought on by the masters, and fought for the masters.

I remember the words of Tolstoy which are indeed the words of history:

"To keep the majority in submission, the minority in power employs the military caste. Every government needs the army first of all to keep its own subjects in submission and make it safe to exploit labor."

I see that Preparedness means—we are setting our feet in that same path. Whether those now shouting for it know it or not, there are those who do know that in the future inevitable conflicts with Labor and the masses, a trained military caste will be valuable.

Labor will not be of that caste. Labor will have no arsenals, guns or ammunition of its own. The militia will be the middle class—the laboring class has no time. The middle class has always been the servants of the ruling class.

I do not fear a war from the outside, but I do fear one from the inside, if this "Preparedness" is carried into effect. For I believe it will make the peaceable solution of the economic social problem impossible.

I believe in another sort of preparedness. Prepare the children with ruddy cheeks and sturdy arms and legs. Prepare for them a happy childhood and schools which teach life, not only books. Be not afraid for truth, and broad toleration of every discussion. Prepare a government for the people, not the people for the government.

Prepare for liberty, not slavery.

Prepare a press which is for truth and not a prostitute for privilege. Prepare a pulpit which is for knowledge—lead where it may. Prepare courts which are for the Justice of Life, not of the law. Prepare a society in which there will be no unemployed in this undeveloped generous country. Prepare for the children a world where each may have his full share of life, love and happiness.

There is no preparation with force that will not end in force. No preparation to argue with bullets but the arguments will be with bullets. In "Preparedness" I foresee the forcible suppression of the struggling masses till it end in bloody revolution.

—CHARLES ERSKINE SCOTT WOOD

A Soldier's Song

Alden Ward

To be sung to the sound of drums, marching, at Labor's Anti-Preparedness Demonstrations

SUMMON me forth with trumpet and drum,
I will come, I will come!
Summon me forth from my homely field,
Summon me forth from the harvest yield,
Summon me forth to my sword and shield!
I will come, I will come!

Gather me in from hill and dale,
I will come, I will come!
Gather me in to your flaunting flag,
Gather me in to the weary drag,
Gather me in to shoulder my Krag!
I will come, I will come!

Order me down to the crimson trench,
I will come, I will come!
Order me down to the cannon's breath,
Order me down to the flodden heath,
Order me down to a soldier's death!
I will come, I will come!

Out of the Hell of a tortured soul,
I will come, I will come!
Out of the Hell you have damned me to,
As you murdered me I shall murder you!
This is the cup that you would brew!
I will come, I will come!

Shadows on Mist

Robert Morlett

SOMETIMES your heart becomes sick of the big important things of life. Your nature resents their attempted intrusion. Your brain seems to bend beneath the burden of them; and their imagined weight wearies your soul to death. Your mind becomes quite nauseated with the pride and honor of them. You feel tired; and you long passionately for some quick and sure escape from the enervating influence of the big important things that would swamp you.

After all, what are nobilities, and powers, and positions? Duty is only a slave-driver, and responsibility a sign of slavery. The majesty of endeavor falls on you. Righteousness feeds you up. Keeping the flag flying is a simile, or something like that, to turn down the corners of your mouth. The big important things, such as national soul, national need, national integrity, national indignation, and national all-pull-together-boys, serve but

to contract the lungs, and to shut out the sunrays. You soon begin to feel as if you were dying in a windowless and doorless cell. No wonder the heart sickens at big important things, and rushes to seek release in the trivial affairs of every day life.

And is any harm done? Hardly, for you escape to the open, the pure, the simple, and, it may be, the real. You leave the lies to grow gouty. You leave corruption to stew in its own juice. You leave national service to fatten and decay amidst its own filth. Behind you remain hypocrisy and clamor, suspicion, double-dealing, patriotic vice, and the tri-colored mammonism that takes its tints from the flag upon which it fawns. You shake off the parasites and trample upon the vermin. You dis sever yourself from insanitary civilization; and, naturally enough, you approach nearer the heart of humanity.

Is it not true that the death of a son is more humanly interesting than the causes of the war? Is it not true that the suffering of someone near and dear to you affects you far more than the rights and wrongs of nations? Is it not true that the economic anxiety forced upon you by your brother patriots occasions you more worry and trouble than all the national needs put together?

Your heart bleeds painfully at the loss of your father. Compared to the torture of your lacerated love, the devastation of a whole nation is nothing. Yet the latter is a big important thing; and the former is a petty affair, easily to be overlooked, quickly to be forgotten, if we are to obey the appeals of the big important people, who are the priests of the shadows on the mists.

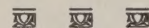
Thoroughly can you understand the lonely death of a son. Acutely can you grasp the affliction of a brother broken for life. Terribly can you realize the sordid misery of an incurable disease. Painfully can you comprehend the hopeless enmity between wages and foods. These are petty unimportant things, too trivial to offer opportunity for emphasis, too light and reasonless for consideration, too foolishly remote from the national conscience to petition attention.

Let us forget all the little affairs that make the fluid of life for us. Let us forget all the petty things of ordinary existence, the subdued, quiet, homely emotions, the goings and comings of life and love and death. Let us forget the commonplaces. Let us forget the social home life that we need and desire with all the inherited power of our natures. Let us forget everything we can realize; and let us remember the big important things we can only see as shadows on mist.

What does it matter if we can never hope to understand them? What does it matter if always they keep far apart from the progressive realities of our little lives? What does it even matter if we are inclined to be suspicious of them? It is our duty to conquer that mistrustfulness.

They are too big and important for our puny intellects. They are too big and important to harmonize with our life-needs. They are too big and important to be anything but unfriendly to our social welfare. Yes, perhaps; but we must have faith in these shadows on the mist; we must bow our heads to them in meek submission; we must worship, and, if necessary, immolate our lives and our life needs to them. We must forget the little unimportant things.

Ah! but we cannot. They come crowding around us. They take no denial. We must live, and we need them. If only we would learn the lesson they teach, it might be that amongst the first things to disappear would be those terribly anti-social shadows on the mist.



WE carry faithfully what we are given, on bruised shoulders, over rough mountains, and when perspiring, we are told: "Yea, life is hard to bear!" But man himself only is hard to bear. The reason is that he carries too many strange things on his shoulders. Like the camel, he kneels down and allows the heavy load to be put on his back.

—Nietzsche.

THE BLAST

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Reflections

Preparedness Psychology

THE advocates of preparedness parades are shrewd psychologists. They know, of course, that quantity, numbers prove nothing to the intelligent man. But they also know that the great voting herd is not made up of intelligently thinking beings. Size, large bulk, great numbers are imposing, convincing arguments to the average individual. Hence the idea of monster preparedness parades; the unthinking man is, like unto the Lord of Hosts, always on the side of the largest numbers. In this sense he may properly be said to be godlike.

Great pre-election parades and torchlight processions have latterly gone out of style. But two decades ago those were the chief argument of the politician to prove the justice of his cause and the undisputable fitness of his candidate. Candidates and platforms come and go, but the politician is always with us. His method is unchangeable; it is the unfailing appeal to the lowest intelligence and mob psychology.

To Abolish War

IT IS a promising sign that Labor bodies in various parts of the country are beginning to awaken to the heinous schemes of the militarists and their preparedness campaign. To offset the effect of the jingo parades it is well for the workers to organize anti-preparedness demonstrations in every large industrial center. Indifference of the toilers to this the greatest menace now facing them is a strong encouragement to the patriots for profit. It is therefore urgent upon the workers and all others opposed to militarism not only to boycott and remain away from the preparedness parades, but to more positively and aggressively crystallize and demonstrate their opposition to organized murder. Great anti-preparedness demonstrations are therefore of immediate necessity. That alone, however, will not do. At best such demonstrations, like all similar massings of people, are very negative in character; passive, I almost said. Something more positive, more active is needed.

Labor has been protesting and demonstrating for these many years, but nothing has been or ever can be achieved by mere passive protest, be it at the ballot box or on the street. To be effective the voice of protest must be backed by determination to make good. Protest presupposes intelligent opposition to a certain condition or situation. But even the most intelligent opposition is ineffective if merely theoretic. There are thousands, aye millions of men all over the world strongly opposed to killing and murder, yet the European slaughter goes right on. Their opposition is theoretical, passive, not active. Aye, in the trenches there are at this very moment millions of soldiers conscientiously opposed to war and sick of bloodshed—and they keep right on loading their guns and shooting their fellow men, their brother workers, their "revolutionary" comrades even, who are equally opposed to war and as heartily sick of the whole business of murder.

No, such opposition won't do. It accomplishes nothing. It

leaves things as they are. It finds superficial and purposeless satisfaction in protests and petitions, respectably ineffective demonstrations, and in the inane feeling of "conscious superiority."

I repeat: protest, intelligent opposition, must—to be effective—be backed by determination to act. The will to action is the vital need.

Today a great labor demonstration against war and preparedness. Tomorrow the very same workers hurrying back to the munition factories to continue the manufacture of the implements of human slaughter! Continuing to produce the very objects that make wars possible, even necessary.

Men of labor, brother workers—you, you alone have the power to call Halt! to war and make human slaughter forever impossible. You, the army of toilers, hold the key to the great problem of universal peace. In your hands is the solution if you but have the Will to Action. The menace of militarism and preparedness will disappear when you refuse to produce the implements of human slaughter.

Thus, thus only can a labor anti-preparedness parade be made dignified, purposeful and fundamentally effective.

The Great Adventure

LUKE NORTH, editor of *Everyman*, is the father of the Great Adventure. Last year, when he first spoke to me about it, he pictured it a truly great social adventure: the spontaneous uprising of the people against monopoly and privilege, against landlordism and the holding of the Earth out of the use of the common people. An uprising that involves the breaking down of established tradition and precedent, the bold defiance of rule and regulation, the denial of the sanctity of legal possession and parchment lore. In truth, a Great Adventure.

I believe there is nothing more potent in the individual as well as in the collective life than the appeal of the Ideal. The urge of freedom, of independence, the joy of life, the social instinct, the love of family, of country, of humanity—these are the passions of Man. Wrongly directed, they make for murderous patriotism, persecution of unpopular ideas and social antagonisms. Properly directed, these very forces would rejuvenate the world and transmute this vale of hatred and tears into a world of sunshine and laughter.

But to be thus directed, our appeal to the people must be based upon the fundamental idealism of the human heart. An appeal that shall set the minds and emotions of man aflame with the fire of Liberty, of free Manhood, and in the quest of this great Social Grail be inspired by the joy of Daring, the hope of Achieving.

I know that my good friend Luke shares this view. But with full appreciation of the sincerity and devotion of the workers in the Great Adventure, I must frankly say that the methods employed are not designed to inspire either the joy of Daring or the hope of Achieving.

What matter the methods—I am told—so long as we accomplish the Great Adventure? And why—they further argue—should not all libertarians, rebels of every school and shade, for once unite upon this great object?

Indeed, there is too much enervating division among the radicals. Too much hairsplitting over philosophic differences, too many isms, too much narrow patriotism to one's particular church and creed. No one regrets this lack of unity and co-operation, this sad lack of understanding, more than I do. In fact, the chief purpose of *THE BLAST* is to get the rebels throughout the country in closer touch with each other, to develop a better mutual understanding among them, to crystallize the scattered revolutionary sentiment in some definite, active expression, regardless of theoretical differences and varying isms. *THE BLAST* is open to, and we are anxious to co-operate with, every and all revolutionary elements, irrespective of their program for the all-too-distant future. *THE BLAST* is an open revolutionary forum in the fullest sense.

But every intelligent man realizes that such co-operation can proceed only upon some common basis. There can be no unity of thought or action among people differing in their fundamental conceptions. Forced co-operation among such can lead only to confusion and disappointment, and is doomed to failure from the very beginning.

To be successful, to be even educationally worth while, illuminating, the Great Adventure and all similar projects must make it its first, perhaps even its exclusive purpose, to emancipate the people from their hoary prejudices and traditions. I don't care what our plans for the future, there will never be taken the first step toward the Dawn till we have undermined and destroyed the universal belief that "the other fellow" must be held down, forced to conform and to live by rule and regulation. In other words, the spook of authority walking in almost all of us must be driven out before we shall have at least that modicum of liberty without which social life is a dismal failure and curse.

To gather signatures for a petition to put the Great Adventure on the ballot, to direct men and women to the voting polls, be they Single Tax, Socialist, Labor, or what not—these are the cogs and wheels of present day society. They are there to keep the existing machinery of our social and political life going and intact. However you may manipulate that machinery, it is designed to serve but one purpose: to stupefy the mind, to weaken the will, to paralyze independent thought and action—in short, to kill the spirit and purpose in the endless meshes of the complex political machinery.

An appeal to the policeman for protection gives him added dignity and power, and makes him the more necessary. Playing politics, using the machinery of courts, of law and government, merely serves to strengthen these institutions, destroys the initiative and self-reliance of the individual, deludes the masses with the hope of reform through politicians, and perpetuates the belief in the authority and faith in the justice of our rulers and masters.

Not on that road lies the solution of any social problem. You will persuade the Lords of the Earth to get off their unused acres when you have induced the Captains of Industry to get off the back of Labor. Not till then. The Masters of Life will not allow you to manipulate their own game to their detriment. They will give you this and that political plaything as long as it does not endanger their seat in the saddle. But there will always be rider and ridden as long as we merely tinker with their relative position.

The monopoly of land is not the real issue. Nor, alone, the monopoly of the mechanical means of production and distribution. Our motto must be, Land and Machinery. Free land alone will solve absolutely nothing. Without free access to the means of production and distribution, the land is useless.

To the People of San Francisco

Whereas, The police and press have continued to misrepresent the facts in connection with the killing of Sergeant Moriarity and thereby destroying the character of a great revolutionary soul by leading the public to believe our comrade, Vladimir Osokin (Philip Ward), a crook, a bandit or a counterfeiter, instead of what he, even in his dying hour, was not afraid to seal with his life blood in the words: "I am not a bandit, but an Anarchist Communist."

Whereas, We, his comrades, knowing his real character, his high ideals, his great soul in the cause of humanity, feel the necessity of sketching his character, life and beliefs as we knew and loved him.

Whereas, It is known to us that Vladimir Osokin (Philip Ward) was a Russian political exile, a man of brilliant learning in his own country, and one who withstood the tortures of the Siberian prisons of the Czar, and escaped to this country still imbued with the lofty principles for which he had suffered

Neither can be had separately, or is to be gotten for the asking. It is pernicious activity to lead the people to believe so. It is this belief that is the cornerstone of man's slavery.

In the Camp of the Enemy

THE case of the Brothers Magon is in the hands of the jury as we go to press. Of course, Comrades Enrique and Ricardo have no faith in the justice of the courts. Old seasoned veterans of the Revolution, they are prepared again to seal their devotion to the great cause of free Mexico with their lives, if need be.

My personal impression in the court room strengthened my conviction that a revolutionist gains nothing by resorting to legal technicalities. It is equally naïve in the political as in the judicial arena to hope to beat the masters at their own game.

Our Comrades Magon of course know it. But unfortunately their imperfect command of English made a personal, revolutionary defense by themselves impossible. However, they made the best of the situation on the stand, in spite of continuous interference by Prosecutor and Judge.

Whether doomed to prison or not, Enrique and Ricardo Flores Magon will continue to inspire the great Mexican struggle with their own lofty ideals and devoted courage.

The New Strike

THE striking longshoremen of San Francisco seem to have chosen effective methods to bring the ship owners to their senses. The million dollar fire on the water front is a good beginning. Repeated visitations of the "red cock" will impress the masters with the novel idea that the strikers are "on the job" even if they have quit work.

When the industrial slaves not merely lay down their tools but actually strike a blow in behalf of their interests, the bosses soon come to the conclusion that the "common good" demands a quick settlement. That is the history of every strike, small or big. If the toilers would apply this lesson on a larger scale, wage slavery would not survive very long.

Perhaps the near future has in store a strike of solidaric Labor, throughout the country, that shall initiate a more positive phase of the Labor struggle. A strike that shall no longer demand a few more crumbs off the table of the masters. Rather one that will make no demands whatever, but which will simply exclude the employer parasite from the scheme of things. Instead of leaving his work, for instance, the New Strike will take possession of factory, railroad, of mill, field and ship, and organize production and distribution on the basis of free exchange without bosses and without profits.

Then exploitation and poverty will disappear, and life be worth living.

persecution in Russia, namely: the education, the organization and the rebellion of the masses of Labor to free themselves from industrial slavery and poverty.

Whereas, It is known to us, his comrades, that he has been an active spirit all over this country in organizing and stimulating the spirit of resistance to oppressive industrial conditions generally, especially among his own people, the Russian workers.

And Whereas, It is known to the Russian working men of the Union Iron Works that he was the leading spirit in gaining solidarity among them, and that he wrote their manifestos and demands and was prominent in their councils in their recent strike for better working conditions.

And Whereas, It is known, and the police do now know, that our comrade, Vladimir Osokin (Philip Ward), was sent on an errand from the lunch stand near the Union Iron Works, where he worked, to the car barns near by to change a \$5.00

gold piece into small change, necessary at the lunch stand, and that further, owing to the early morning hour and his inability to speak or explain himself in English, the car barn employes became excited and took him either for a bandit or a counterfeiter. They summoned the police, who on arrival laid violent hands on our comrade, who not understanding what was the cause and probably believing that he was to be jailed for his strike activities, resisted such violence with the same means that would have been employed to subdue him, even knowing that such an act would cost his life.

Now, therefore, Be It Resolved, That this manifesto be published that a great revolutionary character shall not die unheard, unhonored and unsung.

THE VOLONTA ANARCHIST GROUP
UNION OF RUSSIAN WORKERS
FREEDOM GROUP
FEDERATIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
RUSSIAN RADICAL ORGANIZATIONS
THE BLAST GROUP

Why Women Will Get the Vote

B. C. Federationist

MORE than 70,000 women are now employed at skilled and semi-skilled trades in Birmingham, England. Presumably this is but an instance of what is being brought about as one of the results of the war, not only in England but in all the rest of the war-cursed countries. The introduction of female labor into a large number of industries and at skilled occupations heretofore filled solely by male workers, affords grounds for much speculation as to what the status of the male worker is to be in industry after the war ends and matters are once more adjusted to a peace level. The question naturally arises, will the female workers quietly abandon their new-found employments and meekly revert to their former economic level in the productive process, or will they insist upon clinging to that which the fortunes of war have placed in their hands, regardless of the protests and demands of the erstwhile aristocrats and semi-aristocrats of the Labor world who find themselves thus displaced?

As a matter of further speculation it would be quite interesting to know just how the masculine job-chaser is going to act in the face of this increased competition that he may be called upon to meet. We note already that the Liverpool longshoremen have threatened to go out on strike unless the women who have invaded their ancient and honorable calling at the Leyland line docks in that city are discharged. This may possibly presage another war to follow close upon the heels of the present fratricidal holocaust that is rending Europe. A war between the sexes over the possession of jobs instead of a war between national bands of commercial brigands over "places in the sun," "the freedom of the seas," "the rights of small nations," for "civilization," for "kultur," for "freedom," for "democracy" and other things too numerous to mention, as well as "self defense," which is thrown in for good measure. That a sex war is more than apt to occur as a result of this opening of the door of opportunity to the so-called weaker sex, through the necessity arising from war conditions, has been already pointed out by at least one French observer. It is not readily seen how such a struggle can be well avoided, for it is scarcely possible that the female workers will abandon the economic advantage they may have gained, or the male workers relinquish that which they have so long held, without a struggle.

To anyone at all acquainted with the nature of the capitalist beast, the attitude of the employer of labor in such a controversy is a foregone conclusion. He will become as valiant and noisy a champion of woman's rights, espe-

cially the right to work where she will and for such wages as she may be forced to accept, as he now is of the rights of the male workers to do similar things for the peace of mind and repose of the soul of those who, by divine providence, have been duly appointed to "give them work," irrespective of sex, color, race or creed. Women having proven equally or more profitable, will not be dispensed with by the employers of labor because of the pitiful wailings or noisy threats of male job-seekers who may feel aggrieved thereat. After having fought for their respective countries, and saved them for their masters, those who are either lucky or unlucky enough to return to civil life will face conditions infinitely worse than anything they even dreamed of before. The breaking down of the last remaining barriers that have thus far prevented the complete sacrifice of woman upon the altar of profit in the competitive shambles of the capitalist wage mart, by her swift and complete introduction into the skilled and semi-skilled trades, will augment and emphasize the sacrificial agony that Labor has suffered since the first slave was sweated in order that a sweet savor might arise unto the nostrils of his master.

The noisy advocates of "votes for women" may rest assured that their pet hobby will go through with flying colors as soon as the war is ended. Industrially emancipated woman must needs be armed with political power in order to withstand such assaults as might be directed against her by those masculine workers who might feel exceedingly sore because of her having invaded those industrial precincts previously held sacred to themselves. The master class will see that she gets the franchise. There is little doubt of that. And with her franchise she will become a bulwark of defense to everything that is conservative in political and industrial life. The political activities of woman in those localities where she has already received the franchise leads inevitably to that conclusion.

INTERNATIONAL PICNIC Of "THE BLAST"

TUESDAY, JULY 4, 1916
BEGINNING AT 10 A. M.

MILLET'S PARK. COLMA

TICKETS, 25 CENTS

Take Any Car and Transfer to Cemetery or San Mateo Cars
Valuable Gate and Game Prizes

Hoist the Flag of Betterment

Copy of Letter Sent to Edward Swann, District Attorney, New York

SIR: As a lover of children, as a believer in the right of every child to health, happiness and opportunity, I address myself to you with reference to the recent arrest of Emma Goldman in New York City on a charge of disseminating information relating to methods of birth control. I happen to be a personal friend of Emma Goldman, but that fact is not guiding me to protest in the present connection. I consider, and reason supports me, that the issue of birth control is larger than any individual, any sect or any antiquated conviction based on indifference to the welfare of the child itself.

You happen to represent one little district—a very little district if measured by the broad conception of human relationships, human worth and human possibilities. New York, even though unnecessarily crowded to the point of suffocation, weighs only a modicum in the world's scale of action, discernment and accomplishment.

But even so, you represent the venomous clutch of a backward society which in the main thinks only of delivering blows and not at all of the effect of the bruises. In your capacity of district attorney you are in the fullest sense the agent of the present and serve as changing passion dictates to carry out the flats of unawakened conscience. Nevertheless, I think you will admit that you are supposed to represent the intelligent minority as well as the dumb, cloven-brained, unthinking majority. Did I not believe this to be the fact, I would not bother to address you.

You may not know it, Mr. District Attorney, but birth control is not new. It has been practised successfully for a very great number of years. In proof of this contention it is only necessary to cite the numerous couples of means who have either a few children or none. Incidentally, I may say to you that I was a professional nurse for many years, and I know it to be a fact that the use of preventives even among the bourgeois class is general.

Now and then through carelessness these secret defiers of lawful decorum find it necessary to resort to an abortion, but statistics will bear me out when I say that there is an oversupply of practitioners at all times able and willing to put an end to unwelcome human life—providing the elastic fee for such services is forthcoming; and all this notwithstanding the fact that law is supposed to prevent the commission of abortions. All of which bears only on the cases of those who have the price. It does not touch the poor who, alas, have to pay dearly in added burdens for their lack of knowledge.

Now if a woman in comfortable circumstances desires children, that is her right, her just due, her privilege; but the case of the poor, ignorant, over-taxed mother is entirely another matter. Who are you or who am I that we should impose trials on another merely because we happen to cling to an outworn notion that woman's body is neither more nor less than a receptacle for the whims of chance? What manner of effrontery is it that dares appropriate the term intelligence to itself and at the same time sentence womankind to a compulsory service which she can't either in justice to herself or her offspring bear?

I answer you that such an infliction is the product of a mouldy conception that too long has had the say over innocent victims borne into life without their sanction. I say to you that our world is blood soaked this day because the hand of willful

ignorance, superstition and unseeing prejudice guides the destinies of men—the same hand that would still force woman to conceive children on a basis of indifference to their welfare. I say to you furthermore that only insanity will insist on overworking an exhausted product, and that even if the bearer, in the case of children, be conditioned, what sort of an intellect would deliberately will our future generation a bequest of indigence, frailty and want of opportunity? I do not have to tell you the poor receive such a portion. You can look about you anywhere and see that they do.

It is the children of the poor I speak for—the sickly, ill-nourished, stunted dupes of a callous-visioned pseudo-civilization. In behalf of the child, of any and every child, I tell you that you do wrong if you lend your energies toward the prosecution of any individual who shall stand fearlessly for lifting the curtain which shuts out light, knowledge and life from the great submerged human mass. You do yourself a greater injustice than you could possibly do any torch-bearer of enlightenment if you knowingly, willfully aid the powers of night to stem the approach of a better day.

Knowledge is what is needed—free, frank, open knowledge which shall be no man's secret, but the possession of all men and women who need and desire it. Whether the information relates to birth control or any other vital theme, any and all knowledge which will benefit mankind should be made accessible without hindrance to the human race.

Not for Emma Goldman do I speak to you, but for the children who are to come after both her and you. Not every man is given an opportunity to help hoist the flag of betterment, but in this case a really great one is given you. You have the chance to show that you are a man of appreciation, of sympathy, of discernment; that you would not willingly inflict misery on dumb defenseless souls; that if your voice is to be heard, it will be heard in defense of little children, not against them.

I am going to hope that you will hear what I have said to you. It is a long cry, a lasting cry—one that touches the fiber of well-being for all of us to the uttermost depths of thought and feeling. In the end this sphere will be a fit habitation for the sons and daughters of men, I hope; but meantime individuals can accelerate progress by standing for it. You can assist by lending your aid to a cause which is worthy of any man's support. I am, sir, sincerely yours, REBEKAH E. RANEY

“The Pest and Other Plays”

“THE PEST, and Other One-Act Plays,” by Emanuel Julius, is now ready for distribution. In “The Pest” the writer pokes fun at American novelists. This play contains a criticism of American literary art in a form that is most attractive. His second play, “Slumming,” is frankly a Socialist's opinions on present-day conditions. The third, “Adolescence,” hits puritanical intolerance. The plays may be obtained by writing direct to Emanuel Julius, Box 125, Girard, Kans. Enclose ten cents.



YOUR laws do not prevent robbery; they cause it. They first make the thieves and then they hang them. Everywhere in this country of yours I see idle landlords living on the toil of helpless tenants, the idle few enriched, the hard-working many becoming paupers, and so thieving for their bread. In fact, the whole social system seems to be a conspiracy of the rich against the poor, its whole legal system a device for sanctioning that conspiracy. * * * The ownership of private persons in land and proprietary claims must be abolished and exiled; till that is done, poverty and wretchedness and crime are inevitable.

—Sir Thomas More

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Notice to Readers of The Alarm

1605 Milwaukee Avenue,
Chicago, Ill., June 1, 1916.

Comrades:

The postoffice officials have notified us that all past issues of the **ALARM** are unavailable. As we have no intention of changing the policy of the paper, we will not be able to send it out as heretofore. But we are determined to continue the publication and to get same out to the subscribers and to reach the workers of this country with our propaganda.

As our expenses will be more than doubled, we must ask your financial aid. Send us a donation and help us to carry on the propaganda against ignorance, poverty and oppression. Order bundles of fifty copies or more for distribution every month. We will ship by express.

Yours for freedom,

THE INTERNATIONAL PROPAGANDA GROUP OF CHICAGO

Our Mail Bag

SAN FRANCISCO FRIENDS. Received per S. \$15.10 for David Caplan. As I am to be in Los Angeles by the time this issue is out, I will turn the amount over to D. C. in person, if possible.

EDITOR BRAUERER ARBEITER ZEITUNG, Cleveland. If you had read your exchanges more carefully, you would not have credited the Allentown *Labor Herald* with the article on "Prohibition: A Crime and a Menace," which you republished in your issue of May 13. The *Labor Herald* copied the article from THE BLAST of April 1. You are perfectly welcome, though. I do not believe in copyrights, least of all in ideas. Crediting is also a nuisance. If you see a good thing in THE BLAST, cop it, friend, cop it.

INDUSTRIAL WORKER AND OTHER LABOR PAPERS. The suppression of the radical press is the greatest menace to every revolutionary propaganda. It is not a question of our differing tactics or ideas. It is fundamental for all of us. It is both criminal and petty to ignore in your columns the recent suppression of several radical papers. THE BLAST is still excommunicated by the Post Office. For full details see our issue of May 1.

H. SCHORR, St. Louis. \$1.00 for tickets and the previous \$2.00 received. Too bad you are leaving. We need such good workers in St. Louis, but I know that you'll be on the job, no matter where the storm of life may land you. Will supply the missing copies as soon as you send permanent address.

MR. AND MRS. STERRETT, WASHINGTON, D. C. I regret that in No. 12 of THE BLAST your quotation from Margaret Sanger's paper reading, "The Post Office was supposed to be, etc. (fill end of paragraph), appeared without extra quotation marks. Purely an oversight. No harm done, I hope.

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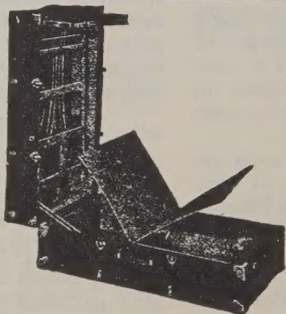
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